

Chapter 4: Natural Disasters

D. Earthquakes

Although earthquakes are unusual in the northeastern United States, the possibility does exist. Unfortunately, no warning is usually forthcoming for an earthquake. Therefore, precautionary procedures need to be part of the routine inspection of your facility. The following are suggestions:

1. Hold drills so staff knows what to do in case of an earthquake.
2. Check battery-powered equipment: radios, flashlights, emergency lighting, etc.
3. Check recovery kit (see chapter 5).
4. Check for defective electrical wiring or leaking gas connections. Bolt down water heaters and gas appliances.
5. Overhead lighting fixtures should be made secure.
6. Deep cracks in the ceiling or foundations should be investigated and repaired.
7. Brace or anchor shelving units.
8. If indoors, take cover either under a heavy desk or table; or in a supported doorway or along an inside wall. Stay away from glass or book stacks. Do not use candles, matches or any other open flame because of possible gas leaks.
9. Do not dash for exits since stairways may be broken. It may be necessary to have more than one evacuation route.
10. Never use elevators since power may fail.
11. Be aware that aftershocks are likely to occur.